

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Oregon	
COUNTY: Grant	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	MAR 20 1973

1. NAME	
COMMON:	
AND/OR HISTORIC: Kam Wah Chung Company Building	

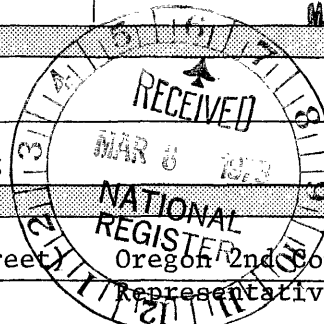
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: John Day City Park (Canton Street)			
CITY OR TOWN: John Day			
STATE Oregon	CODE 41	COUNTY: Grant	CODE 023

3. CLASSIFICATION			
CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/> Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY			
OWNER'S NAME: City of John Day		(Owner notified 11-7-72 of proposed nomination)	
STREET AND NUMBER: City Hall			
CITY OR TOWN: John Day	STATE: Oregon	CODE 41	

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION			
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Grant County Courthouse			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN: Canyon City	STATE: Oregon	CODE 41	

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS			
TITLE OF SURVEY: Statewide Inventory of Historic Sites and Buildings			
DATE OF SURVEY: 1970			
<input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local			
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Parks and Recreation Section			
STREET AND NUMBER: Oregon State Highway Division			
CITY OR TOWN: Salem	STATE: Oregon	CODE 41	



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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Kam Wah Chung Company Building is located in a City park in John Day, a small town of 1600 population, in Eastern Oregon's cattle country. Chinese who flocked to the district in the 1860s to work the mines congregated in small "China towns". In John Day, the social, medical and commercial needs of the Chinese were met by the Kam Wah Chung Company.

The building was constructed about 1866 or 1867, several years after the discovery of gold in the district. While the building calls to mind similar stone houses seen along the southern coast of China, recent close inspection of the construction suggests that the building followed the pattern of utilitarian structures on the frontier in the American West in that wings and additions were gradually accreted.

The ground story, measuring about 22 by 45 feet, is of native sandstone. The frame second story over the central portion dates from the 1890s and is covered with horizontal drop siding typical of the period. Access to the second story is provided on the facade by a flight of stairs and a deck supported by posts. In 1917 or 1918 a masonry shop wing was added to the north end. This addition, like that of the second story, has a gable roof. Shed roofs cover the single story portions. The ceiling between floors in the main building is two feet thick. One foot of sand and gravel was used for insulation and fire protection. Interior walls are of rough boards. Some of the ceiling beams are poles. Window and door openings in the ground story are recessed in thick masonry walls.

The Kam Wah Chung Company Building is intact, there having been few interior or exterior changes since 1918. A Chinese professor of Chinese culture in America examined the contents of the building and judged the voluminous correspondence of Lung On, one of the establishment's proprietors, with friends and family in China to be among the most important sources for cultural studies in the western United States. Among the relics left in the building are various canned Chinese delicacies, dice, joss sticks, opium tins, medicine bottles, brass utensils, and a surprising cache of seventy-three bottles of pre-Prohibition whiskey. Among other documents are a ledger with daily entries by Lung On and a secret code book of a Chinese tong. Even the shrine and furniture used by the occupants are in place to preserve the exotic atmosphere.

According to terms of the will of the last private owner, the City of John Day is obliged to maintain the property as a memorial to the many Chinese who worked in local gold fields. Seeking assistance for development of the museum, City officials received \$800 in matching funds from the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1972 for consultant services required to produce a "preservation feasibility study on the long-range restoration and preservation plan of the Kam Wah Chung Co. Building (1866-1940)."

2. Location (Cont')

The building is located in the SW 1/4 of the SW 1/4, Sec. 23, T. 13 S., R. 31 E. of the Willamette Meridian, in Grant County, Oregon.

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8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- ☐ Pre-Columbian | ☐ 16th Century | ☐ 18th Century | ☒ 20th Century
☐ 15th Century | ☐ 17th Century | ☒ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) ca. 1866-1940

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | <u>Mining Frontier</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | <u>Cultural Immigrations</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Kam Wah Chung Company Building is the unique landmark of the Chinese experience in Oregon. It is estimated that 10,000 Chinese labored in the gold fields around John Day and Canyon City, Galena, Susanville, Granite and other points in the Blue Mountains. During the height of mining activity, Grant County numbered between 1,000 and 5,000 Chinese among its population.

The characters that spell Kam Wah Chung can be translated roughly as "Golden Flower of Prosperity." Principal owners of the Kam Wah Chung Company Building were Lung On and Ing Hay who moved to John Day as young men, in 1877, formed a partnership and purchased the store which had already been in operation for about a decade. Under management of the new owners, the store doubled as a doctor's office and trading post. It was also a pharmacy, a place where tables were available for letter-writing, a social club for readers and gamblers, a bank, an assay office, and a shrine as well as a residence.

"Doc" Hay was a legendary figure. His treatments were popular with Chinese and the white population alike. Not a native of China, he had been born in Walla Walla, Washington, where he learned the medicinal properties of herbs, bear paws and opium. While Doc Hay practised as an herbalist and diagnostician, Lung On was the merchant. His stock of goods included such items as Havanna cigars, cigarettes, candy, rice, silk cloth, Chinese herbs and opium. When Lung On died in 1940, Bob Wah became Doc Hay's partner. Upon Doc Hay's death in 1952 at the age of 89, Wah inherited the property. Bob Wah, known familiarly as "Doc" Bob, spent little time in the old building thereafter, preferring to work in a house across the street. For all practical purposes, the store was closed from 1945 with its contents in place. In response to the City's need for land for a park, Doc Bob had arranged to leave the property to the City before his demise in 1966. The deed, executed in 1955, included a condition that the Kam Wah Chung Company Building be retained as a museum in memory of the Chinese in Eastern Oregon. Meanwhile, Lung On's will had directed that his debts be paid, the necessary partnership arrangements adjusted, and that the rest of his estate go to his daughter, Ling Guey Sin, in Canton, China. She was never found. The estate amounted to \$46,856.25 at the end of 1970 when it was still on deposit with Grant County. Since no legal claimant had appeared by that time, the escheated funds were transferred to the State Land Board, by which body it will be held until 1980. Ordinarily, the funds would be forfeited to the State if no legal heir can be found in the given time. It has not been determined whether or not the State might release these monies for the museum development.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Friedman, Ralph, "Last Vestige of a Chinese Community," The Press (February 3, 1971), Sec. B, 5.
 "Dr. Ing Hay Final Rites Held at John Day," Oregon Journal (July 28, 1952), 3.
 MacNab, Gordon G., "Ancient Stone Building in John Day Houses Grant County's Pioneer Chinese Heritage," Oregonian (May 3, 1970), 35.
 "A Chinese Puzzle in John Day," Capital Journal (April 29, 1970), Sec. 3, 5.
 Maddex, Diane, "Unfolding of a 'Golden Flower'", Preservation News, Vol. 12, No. 3 (March 1972), 7.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES					
CORNER	LATITUDE				LONGITUDE					
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	
NW	0	'	"	0	'	"	44	0	25' 05"	118° 57' 14"
NE	0	'	"	0	'	"				
SE	0	'	"	0	'	"				
SW	0	'	"	0	'	"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: ca. 3/10 of an acre within park site of 3.58 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Paul Hartwig, Assistant Park Historian		DATE February 1973
ORGANIZATION Oregon State Highway Division		
STREET AND NUMBER: State Highway Building		
CITY OR TOWN: Salem	STATE Oregon 97310	CODE 41

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☒ Local ☐

Name

George M. Baldwin

Title Administrator of Highways

Date

FEB 27 1973

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Robert M. Utley
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date

3/20/73

ATTEST:

W. Bradford
 Keeper of The National Register

Date

3/16/73

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